

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 4-18, and 21-24 are pending in the present application. By this amendment, claims 25-40 are canceled without prejudice. Applicants will pursue the canceled claims in a continuation application. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present claims in view of the following remarks.

Entry of the above amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 (a) in that the above Amendment (1) places the claims in condition for allowance; (2) places the claims in better condition for consideration on appeal, if necessary; (3) does not raise any new issues; and (4) does not add new claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims. For the reasons given above, entry of the above amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 is respectfully requested.

I. Formal Matters

Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicants note with appreciation that claims 1-2, 4-18, and 21-24 are allowed.

Claims 27-29 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. However, if claims 27-29 were amended to include all of the limitations of base claim 25 and any intervening claims, claims 27-29 would include recitations similar to those in claims 1, 4-5, and 8. Therefore, claims 27-29 have been canceled.

II. Claim Rejections

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Over Boss in View of Beatty

Claims 25-26 and 32-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 6,157,618 to Boss et al. (hereinafter “Boss”) in view of United States Patent No. 5,920,824 to Beatty (hereinafter “Beatty”). This rejection is respectfully traversed. However, as noted above, claims 25-26 and 32-34 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Over Boss In View Of Beatty and Stille

Claims 30-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Boss in view of Beatty and further in view of United States Patent No. 5,878,397 to Stille et al. (hereinafter "Stille"). This rejection is respectfully traversed. However, as noted above, claims 30-31 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) Over Ishikawa in View of Boss

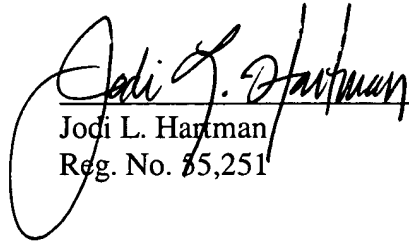
Claims 35-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by United States Publication No. 2003/0017855 to Ishikawa et al. (hereinafter "Ishikawa") in view of Boss. Although the Examiner has stated that claims 35-40 are rejected as being anticipated by Ishikawa in view of Boss, Applicants presume since the Examiner relied on the teaching of Boss to allegedly cure the deficiencies in the teaching of Ishikawa in order to reject claims 35-40 that claims 35-40 are actually being rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishikawa in view of Boss. This rejection is respectfully traversed. However, as noted above, claims 35-40 have been canceled without prejudice.

CONCLUSION

For at least these reasons, Applicants assert that the pending claims 1-2, 4-18, and 21-24 are in condition for allowance. Applicants further assert that this response addresses each and every point of the Office Action, and respectfully requests that the Examiner pass this application with claims 1-2, 4-18, and 21-24 to allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at 404.954.5042.

Respectfully submitted,

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